

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action dated on May 2, 2006.

Claims 1-3, 6-9, and 11 and withdrawn claims 13-19, 21-24, 27-33, 35-37, 40-46, 48-54, and 56 are amended, no claims are canceled, and no claims are added; as a result, claims 1-57 and 104-106 are now pending in this application with claims 1-12 currently pending examination. The amendments to the claims are fully supported by the specification as originally filed. No new matter is introduced. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the amendments above and the remarks that follow.

Support for the amendments may be found in the specification, for example, on page 10, lines 14-16 and on page 15, lines 8-10.

Withdrawn Claims

The withdrawn claims are amended in a manner to follow the amendments to the claims pending examined. Applicant submits that independent claims 13, 27, 40, and 48 and the claims that dependent from these claims are properly linked to claim 1. As demonstrated below, claim 1 is patentable. Thus, with the allowance of claim 1, Applicant respectfully requests the rejoinder and allowance of claims 13-57 and 104-106. *See M.P.E.P. 809 and M.P.E.P. 821.04.*

Claim Objections

Claims 2, 3, 6-9, and 11 were objected to due to informalities. Applicant traverses these grounds for objection of these claims.

Applicant submits that the use of the term "a" in claims 2, 3, 6-9, and 11 is proper. However, in order to further prosecution of the instant application these claims are amended as suggested by the Examiner.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these objections of claims 2, 3, 6-9, and 11, and reconsideration and allowance of these claims.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Farr (U.S. Patent No. 6,376,370) in view of Agnello et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,255,217). Applicant

traverses these grounds of rejection of these claims.

Applicant cannot find in the combination of Farr and Agnello et al. (hereafter Agnello) a teaching or a suggestion of a method that includes subjecting a core conductive layer to a H₂ plasma treatment, where the core conductive layer includes substantially one or more of aluminum, silver, or gold, as recited in amended claim 1. Applicant submits that Farr is silent with respect to subjecting a core conductive layer to a H₂ plasma treatment. Agnello deals with subjecting a layer containing copper to a plasma treatment. Applicant submits that subjecting a layer containing copper to a plasma treatment does not teach or suggest subjecting a layer containing aluminum, silver, or gold to a H₂ plasma treatment. Therefore, Applicant submits that the combination of Farr and Agnello does not teach or suggest all the elements of claim 1. Thus, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over Farr in view of Agnello. Claims 2-12 depend on claim 1. Applicant submits that claims 2-12 are patentable over Farr in view of Agnello for at least reasons stated above with respect to claim 1.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections of claims 1-12, and reconsideration and allowance of these claims.

Withdrawn Claims

For at least the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, Applicant submits that withdrawn claims 13-57 and 104-106 are patentable over Farr in view of Agnello. Thus, with the allowance of claim 1, Applicant respectfully requests the rejoinder and allowance of claims 13-57 and 104-106. *See M.P.E.P. 809 and M.P.E.P. 821.04.*

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (612) 373-6960 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 2 day of August, 2006.



Name



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